# LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Philosophy

## Spring 2024 Courses

**PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy**

The course will provide a general introduction to some of the central problems in philosophy. For example, what do we know, and how do we know it? Does a supremely perfect being exist? Do we have free will? What is the nature of morality? Readings will be from classic and contemporary sources. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Prof. Georgette Sinkler | MW 11AM**

**Discussion Sections: F 11AM, 12PM**

**PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy— Philosophy and the Environment**

Human beings are both a product of and a dominant influence on the physical and biological world we live in. What can we learn about ourselves by understanding our relation to the rest of our world? What implications does this relationship have for how human societies should be organized? Should human beings care about the earth itself and the non-human life on it? We will discuss topics like global warming, human-caused mass extinction, and the role of disease in human biological and cultural evolution.

*Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Instructor TBD | Online ASYNCH**

**Discussion Sections: T 4PM, W 4PM, R 7PM, F1PM**

**PHIL 101: Critical Thinking**

Practical course designed to improve student reasoning skills useful for life, college coursework, and explicitly tested on standardized tests like MCAT, GRE, LSAT. Emphasis is on developing skill at evaluating, formulating and presenting arguments. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Prof. John Whipple | MW 11AM**

**Discussion Sections: F 10AM, 11AM**

**PHIL 102: Introductory Logic**

Information is all around you. It is stored in books, on computers, in your brain, etc. Logic is the study of the most basic property of information: that you can put two pieces of information together to make a new piece of information. This process is called inference and it is at the heart of what it means to be a thinker. In logic, we study inference by trying to give precise rules for what makes a good inference. Our goal is to uncover and understand the hidden structure of information. In addition to the intellectual interest that this project has, it also has important practical benefits. In this course you will learn principles of inference that will be useful to you in any activity that requires careful thought. You will improve your ability to make and evaluate arguments, and you will gain a greater understanding of precision in language. *Gen. Ed.: Natural World (no lab); fulfills University Quantitative Reasoning requirement* .

**Prof. Aidan Gray | MW 10AM**

**Discussion Sections: F 8AM, 9AM, 10AM, 11AM**

**Instructor TBD | Online ASYNCH**

**Sections T 4PM, W 4PM, R 7PM, F 1PM**

**PHIL 106: What is Religion?**

Philosophy of Religion is the critical examination of religious concepts and beliefs. In this course our concern will be the critical examination of the work of various authors during the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century who denied that religious beliefs are about objectively existing entities. These authors took religion to be a human creation, and offered various theories about the origin and nature of this creation. Our task will be to understand what these theories are, as well as to evaluate their justification and their reasonableness. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Prof. Georgette Sinkler | MW 1PM**

**Discussion Sections: F 1PM, 2PM**

**PHIL 109: Who Am I?**

This course is an introduction to philosophy through an investigation of the following questions: Who am I? What does it mean to be human? How am I different from other humans? What is the source of my identity, and is it something I can control? We will think about these questions philosophically, addressing them through philosophical texts from Ancient Greece to the present. Our goal is not just to learn how philosophers past and present have approached these issues, but also to begin to think philosophically ourselves. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Prof. Will Small | TR 2PM**

**Discussion Sections: F 1PM, 2PM**

**PHIL 115: Death**

There are few certainties in life, but one of them is that it ends. You, and everyone you have ever met, will one day die. What does this mean for us? In this course, we take a philosophical approach to death. We ask questions like: Is immortality possible? Would immortality be desirable? How should I feel about my own death? How should I feel about the death of other people? How should the knowledge that I will die affect how I live? *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society*

**Prof. Daniel Sutherland | MW 11AM**

**Discussion Sections: F 11AM, 12PM, 1PM, 2PM**

**PHIL 116: Biomedical Ethics**

Moral issues as they arise in medical contexts, including such topics as abortion, euthanasia, paternalism, allocation of medical resources, and psychiatric issues.

**Instructor TBD | TR 8-9:15AM**

**PHIL 131: Educational Ethics**

A case-based class exploring strategies and approaches for thinking well about hard ethical questions that arise in the course of classroom teaching. Although the focus makes the class particularly suited to those considering a career in education, the skills developed will help facing all sorts of moral dilemmas. *Gen. Ed.: Individual & Society OR Understanding US Society*

**Prof. Anthony Laden | MW 11AM**

**Discussion Sections F 11AM, 12PM**

**PHIL 201: Theory of Knowledge**

We will examine classical as well as contemporary discussions of what it is to know. What do we know? What counts as good evidence, or good reasons, for a claim to know something? Can we know anything? Can we know our selves? Can we know whether there is a God, or any of the other things central to religious belief? What are the proper or best foundations for knowledge? Readings from Descartes, Hume, Kant, Wittgenstein, as well as philosophers of more recent vintage.

**Prof. Sam Fleischacker | MW 2 PM**

**Discussion Sections F 1PM, 2PM**

**For any questions, please contact:**
**Director of Undergraduate Studies**
**Professor Will Small**
**wsmall@uic.edu**

**PHIL 202: Philosophy of Psychology**
Almost everyone agrees that we have minds and we have bodies. What's less clear is exactly how our minds and bodies are related. Is there really just one thing with two ways of describing it? Or, are there two different things that may or may not interact with each other? In this course, we will look at a range of answers to questions about the relation between mind and body. We will then ask whether and how the nature of conscious experience should impact our answers to questions about the relationship between our minds and our bodies.
**Prof. Rachel Goodman | MW 9AM**
**Discussion Sections F 8AM, 9AM**

**PHIL 203: Metaphysics**
Philosophical issues concerning free will, causation, action, mind and body, identity over time, God, universals and particulars. Emphasis varies from term to term.
**Instructor TBD | TR 3:30-4:45PM**

**PHIL 204: Intro to the Philosophy of Science**
The nature of scientific observation, explanation, and theories; confirmation of laws and theories; the relation between the physical and social sciences.
**Instructor TBD | MWF 1PM**

**PHIL 221: Aristotle and his Successors**
This course will introduce Aristotle's philosophy by examining his conceptions of what it is to be a human being and of what it is to live a good human life. We will consider questions such as: What is a rational animal? What does a rational animal need—and need to do—in order to flourish? What is the relationship between thought and action? What role do non-rational sources of motivation play in the life of a rational animal? What is a virtue, and why are virtues worth having? How do we become good? We will read selections from several works by Aristotle (and his Stoic successors), but our focus will be on his De Anima ('On the Soul') and Nicomachean Ethics.
**Prof. Will Small | TR 11-12:15PM**

**PHIL 227: Continental Philosophy 1: Phenomenology and Existentialism**
Existentialism is both highly theoretical and deeply and directly aimed at questions about the human condition that arise for all of us. Philosophers working in the Existentialist tradition confront topics like freedom, anxiety, death, and the absurdity of life, seeking both to understand the source of these features of human existence and what they imply about how to live fully and well given our limitations. In this course we will look at a range of Existentialist philosophers, including Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus. The course will also offer an introduction to Phenomenology, a philosophical movement that lays much of the methodological and theoretical groundwork for later Existential thought. The readings in the course can be difficult, but the issues addressed are familiar to everyone. Together we will work through the difficult, theoretical parts of the reading, and critically evaluate the claims about the nature of human life and how it should be lived
**Prof. Marya Schechtman | TR 12:30-1:45PM**

**PHIL 232: Sex Roles: Moral and Political Issues**
Why do we have female birth control, but no male birth control? What does it mean to say that gender is "socially constructed"? Can words really be oppressive? In this course we will touch on these and other questions as we review key debates in feminist philosophy, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of both gender and gendered forms of injustice.
**Prof. Annette Martín | TR 2-3:15PM**

**PHIL 404: Cooperation and Communication in Evolutionary Perspective**
Human beings, like all other living things, are the product of evolutionary processes that have shaped our bodies and also our psychology and with it the way we interact with other human beings. Although both features are found in other living things, cooperative behavior and cultural learning play a bigger role in human behavior than for most other organisms and underly much of what we consider uniquely human. The course will be focused on exploration of the application of evolutionary ideas to understanding aspects of human culture and human behavior and the philosophical consequences of those ideas. After an introduction to evolutionary theory the course will be focused on two main themes: (1) the implications of evolutionary thinking for understanding human social behavior and the implications for ethics of these accounts; (2) evolutionary understanding of communication including language.
**Prof. Dave Hilbert | TR 11-12:15PM**

**PHIL 410: Introduction to Formal Logic**
In contemporary philosophy much use is made of technical machinery of various sorts. Many topics in metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of science, for example, rely on a familiarity with tools from logic, mathematics, probability theory, etc. In this course we will focus on developing a good understanding of these tools.
**Prof. Nick Huggett | TR 12:30-1:45PM**

**PHIL 423: The Problem of Evil**
The problem of evil is one of the most formidable challenges facing traditional theism. How could a God that is all knowing, all-powerful, and completely good allow events like earthquakes and pandemics to occur that kill hundreds of thousands of people? How could such a God allow thousands of children to die every day from starvation and fail to prevent atrocities like the Holocaust? In this course we will study different historical treatments of the problem of evil, with a focus on two figures from the modern period: Pierre Bayle, and G. W. Leibniz. We will also try to discern the extent to which particular figures' approaches to the problem of evil are grounded in their broader epistemological and metaphysical commitments.
**Prof. John Whipple | MW 9:30-10:45AM**

**PHIL 433: Equality**
What makes inequality unjust? Is it always unjust? And what do we mean by "equality" anyway? Should we even be thinking about equality when we think about justice? We will start off with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, and then move on to a variety of relatively contemporary authors. We'll also look at some empirical studies, especially from the world of education.
**Prof. Anthony Laden | T 3:30-6PM**

**Prerequisites:**
**202 & 204:** One non-logic course in philosophy; or junior or senior standing in the physical, biological, or social sciences; or consent of the instructor
**All other 200-level courses:** One non-logic course in philosophy, or consent of the instructor
**410:** PHIL 210, or consent of the instructor
**All other 400-level courses:** One 200-level course in philosophy, or consent of the instructor